2025

Novel

Gaza Resists

A Suffering That Will Never Be Forgotten

BY:
ESRAA MANSOUR

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Electronic Edition
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Dedication :

To the souls who didn’t wait for media cameras to bear witness…
To the hands that extended bread and medicine before slogans…
To the hearts that broke every day over distances of thousands of miles…
To all who said, "Gaza is in my eyes"—and truly carried it as a tear and a conscience…

Gaza before the storm

Gaza, before the clamor of the latest war descended upon it, lived a simple yet vibrant rhythm. Its streets would awaken with the first light, filled with the calls of vendors peddling their wares. The scent of fresh bread wafted through the markets, mingling with the aroma of coffee poured into small cups at the doorsteps of cafés. Children in their school uniforms filled the roads with movement and laughter, while young people dispersed between schools and universities, carrying books, notebooks, and grand dreams not yet touched by the dust of destruction.

Life was as safe as a besieged city could allow—safe enough to reassure us that tomorrow would resemble today, that tomorrow would bring bread, school, and family gatherings around the table. The markets were never empty, prices didn’t burden

households, and everyone could eat, buy, and live with dignity. Even the blockade, heavy as it was, failed to strip Gaza of its simple beauty. Life was available, basic needs were met, and people lived on the barest minimum as if it were plenty.

At the time, I was in my third year of medical school. I carried my anatomy textbook and imagined myself, a few years later, wearing a white coat, moving between hospital rooms, easing suffering and practicing the profession I had long dreamed of. I was ambitious, staying up late to study, promising myself excellence worthy of all my effort. Every time I lifted my eyes from the book, I saw a clear future, shining like the distant horizon after a long sunset.

At home, my father was an unshakable pillar. He never let us want for anything, turning everything he provided into reassurance and support. Our family evenings were like a beating heart, gathering the fragments of the day and

restoring warmth to the soul. We would gather around a modest table, sharing stories and laughter, filling the space with a sense of fullness—not from an abundance of food, but from an abundance of love. Friends, too, were another life: meetings at cafés, walks on the beach, late-night gatherings where we planned the future and laughed over the details of the present.

Gaza was not without scars. We had lived through many wars and tasted the bitterness of fear and loss. Grief would settle over the city at times, weighed down by news of martyrs and funeral processions that cast an air of absence. But we learned to rise quickly—to return to our streets and schools, to resume our lives as if telling the world: *You will not break us.* After every war, Gaza would don its simple robe again and carry on as if it were a city born from ashes yet never extinguished.

Today, as I recall those days, I realize we were living a true blessing whose value we didn't recognize. We saw routine as a burden and complained about the exhaustion and sameness of our days. But we didn't know that those small details—the call to prayer at alfajer, the smell of fresh bread in the morning, buses crowded with students, family gathered for dinner—were the most precious things we had.

Gaza before the storm was not just a city. It was a vast embrace, a home filled with simplicity and reassurance, a homeland that knew how to give its children joy despite all its cruelty. And today, we don't ask for the impossible… just for one day from that time to return—one day of that routine we once found exhausting but was, in truth, a small paradise we let slip through our fingers.

The First Explosion

It was almost seven in the morning—a time when houses usually begin to wake to familiar sounds: small alarm clocks, the footsteps of schoolchildren, and the scent of dawn bread wafting from nearby bakeries. No one expected this morning to change its face so harshly. Suddenly, a strange sound echoed, as if coming from the heart of the sky—a heavy sound unlike anything familiar. It felt as if the ground itself trembled beneath our feet. In that moment, we knew something extraordinary had begun, something that would change our lives forever.

We all jumped from our beds in panic, exchanging puzzled looks. No one knew the source of the sound or what it meant. The young students, dressed in their school uniforms and preparing to leave, froze in place, their backpacks still on their shoulders, their eyes fixed on the sky. No one was thinking of going anymore—the streets felt

surrounded by questions, and the very air screamed of impending danger.

We turned on the TV in haste, and the news was announcing that we had launched an attack on the occupying state. Inside us was a conflicted mix: a strange sense of joy that the initiative came from our side, that we were no longer silent after years of oppression—but that joy was laced with a deep fear of the response, whose strength everyone knew. We had the will, but they had the weapons.

School was suspended that day, and life suddenly came to a halt. The hours that followed dragged slowly, filled with a "suspicious calm," as if the whole city was holding its breath. The streets were empty, faces anxious, eyes locked on the sky, waiting for what was to come. Ten long hours passed with only scattered distant sounds, like warnings of what was about to happen. Then suddenly, explosions rained down from every direction, and there was no longer any safe place.

The news came in rapidly—rising numbers of martyrs, injuries being rushed to overwhelmed hospitals, and official statements confirming that war had truly begun. Yet all of that still felt somewhat distant—until the first explosion hit our own street. Only then did the war turn from a headline into a personal wound.

In a split second, the sky above us lit up with a searing red, as if the night had caught fire. The walls shook, windows shattered, and glass flew in every direction. The power and internet were cut off, and the street was plunged into a thick darkness, broken only by the flames rising from our neighbor's house, which had been hit directly.

Dust filled the room, as if a wall of sand had collapsed over us. I stood frozen in a corner of the house, my body unable to move—fear had paralyzed me completely. The sound still rang in my ears, and the smell of smoke invaded my nose.

Everything around me looked distorted—a scene too overwhelming to comprehend.

The targeted house burned before our eyes, and the screams of neighbors mixed with the sound of ambulances pushing through shattered glass. Paramedics ran in, pulling the bodies of martyrs from the rubble, while the street looked like a ghost town. No one dared to step outside, as if life itself had suddenly halted by some unspoken decree.

When night fell, we gathered as a family in the living room at the center of the house, hoping it might be safer than the rest. But the truth we all knew was that there was no safe place in war. We sat closely together, as if our bodies could draw strength from each other's presence. We whispered prayers and lifted our hands with trembling hope. Sleep became impossible, and every sound outside awoke in us the possibility of the next explosion.

That night, we realized our previous life was over. We were no longer just residents of a city by the sea—we had become part of an open battlefield. The first explosion didn’t just destroy our neighbor’s house; it shattered the illusion of safety we had clung to. From that moment on, fear became our constant companion, and the sky we once looked up to with peace now threatened us with every passing second.

Under the Burning Sky

The night in Gaza felt like a dark trap. No moon to light the darkness, no stars shimmering in the sky—only a dense blackness waiting to be torn apart by the flash of explosions. Almost every minute, the sky would burst into light, igniting in a deep crimson that stretched across the entire horizon, followed by a thunderous sound that shook the ground and made the shattered windows tremble once again.

The entire city breathed to the rhythm of these explosions. The suffocating moments of darkness didn't last long—every few seconds, that terrifying light would return, turning the night into a suspended hell above our heads. It was not a light of safety, but a slap in the face with every flash, reminding us that death was drawing closer every moment.

The colors in the sky were unnatural. Red, orange, and the blinding white of thermal bombs all became part of the

night war's painting. The white light was harsher than the explosion itself; it revealed the ground and the homes, leaving the entire city exposed under the gaze of the planes. Night was supposed to be a cover, but it turned into a betrayal, exposing everything we tried to hide.

The smell of gunpowder and smoke lingered in the air without pause. The air was no longer clean, but saturated with the bitterness of burning—seeping into our lungs and making them heavier. With every explosion, the clouds would open to thick dust and a scorching scent, spreading from the streets into the homes, until the whole place was soaked in the memory of fire.

The streets seemed frozen. No movement, no cars, no sounds except the constant explosions. The city had turned into a ghost town—dark homes, shattered windows, and streets littered with scattered glass. With every red glow filling the sky, the glass would

shimmer like scattered embers on the ground.

Time at night did not pass. Every minute was long enough to plant dozens of fears. We lived between one explosion and the next in a state of suffocating anticipation, waiting to see where the next strike would fall, and in which moment silence would turn to devastation. The silence before the explosion was sometimes harsher than the explosion itself, as if it were the quiet of death before it speaks.

Nights passed like this for so long that night itself became synonymous with terror. People no longer looked forward to its arrival for rest from the day, but began to dread it—wishing the sun would never set. For all its harshness, the daylight softened the horror of the red lights, while the night became a prison lit by fear every few minutes.

Under the burning sky, we learned that darkness was no longer a friend or a shield, but a partner in revealing our

vulnerability. Every flash on the horizon captured the story of an entire city—a city living between the flames in the sky and the silence of the earth, between death that repeats and life that clings stubbornly to whatever hope remains.

Departure on Dusty Roads

Displacement was the hardest experience I ever went through—the moment I felt the ground being pulled from beneath my feet, and the home that once protected me was no longer able to do anything. That day, there was no time to think. Everything happened so quickly, and yet every detail remains stuck in my memory as if it happened yesterday. The street suddenly filled with people—neighbors and relatives, young and old—each carrying something in their hands: a bag, a sack, or a blanket hastily wrapped. Some dragged old carts loaded with whatever they could manage; others walked with empty hands, as if all they carried were their souls. It looked like a mass procession—no one knew exactly where they were heading, but everyone knew they had to leave.

The neighborhood, once full of life, became empty within minutes. Echoes of voices bounced off crumbling walls: children crying, men shouting at their families to hurry, car engines fighting for space on the narrow road, and rushing footsteps stirring dust at every corner. There was no order, no system—just a collective rush to flee the circle of death. I stood at our doorstep, watching, unwilling to move. The house was behind me, almost staring at me, as if it didn't want to let me go. I couldn't believe the moment had really come—that I had to leave everything and walk away.

My family made the decision. They said staying was impossible, and the bombing was getting closer. I tried to resist, to cling to the familiar, but my mother's words pierced through me: "If you stay here, you will die." I had no choice. I left unwillingly, tears pouring down my face, my hand trembling as I held a small bag packed with a few documents, some photos, and items I felt were the most important in my life.

But I knew a single bag could never carry an entire life, and that no matter what I took, I was leaving behind far more.

I walked down the road, dust filling the air, the sun burning overhead, and the ground beneath our feet seeming to resist carrying the weight of so many people and their burdens. Children were crying, some sleeping on their mothers' shoulders; women were exhausted, drenched in sweat and tears; men tried to mask their helplessness as they dragged the last of their furniture on overloaded carts or cars. Even animals were part of the long procession—donkeys and mules pulling worn wooden wagons, stray dogs running in panic along the roadside. Everything in that place echoed the image of displacement—even the air was heavy with the scent of dust and fear.

I walked, my body moving forward but my soul left behind. I felt like I was slowly leaving the house, leaving a

piece of my heart in every room, at every door, in every corner. The house wasn't just walls and furniture—it was my childhood, my memories, my entire life. With each step away from it, the sorrow doubled. I tried to fool myself, like others did, saying: "Just two days and we'll be back." But deep down I knew it wouldn't be that simple, and that returning was far from guaranteed.

The road felt like an open book narrating stories of loss. Exhausted faces spoke without words, eyes staring blankly with nowhere to look. A woman carried a bag containing all she owned in this world. A man held his sleeping child on his shoulder, staring into the horizon as if searching for a new homeland. Children clutched each other's hands in fear of getting lost. The elderly walked silently, as if in a collective funeral. There wasn't a single family that didn't carry a new wound, and each believed their own was the deepest.

The journey was heavy, interrupted only by the distant sound of shelling—as if chasing us, reminding us that we were only escaping to a temporary stop. We walked without a destination, not knowing where we'd stop or when we might return. The only goal was to get away, to survive for a few more hours. And still, the question echoed inside me: *Would the place we were heading to really be safe? Or was it just another road to a delayed death?

The day was harsh with its heat and dust, and the night even harsher with its cold and dread. By day, we walked under the blazing sun, drenched in sweat and dragging our tired feet. By night, we continued under a long silence, pierced only by the whistling of aircraft above us. There was no time for sleep or rest—only one step after another along the dusty roads.

Displacement wasn't a one-time event—it became a recurring nightmare. Each time we were forced to flee again, leaving something new

behind: books, clothes, photos, postponed dreams. With every displacement, we became lighter in belongings and heavier in memory. It was as if we were slowly eroding, until all we had left were exhausted bodies carrying hearts weighed down by loss.

Displacement wasn't just moving from one house to another—it was the collapse of the very meaning of home. The house became an idea more than a place. We carried the whole homeland in a small bag, in a folded photo, in a tear that never dried. And every time we left, we knew we were losing something we would never get back.

Leaving on dusty roads wasn't just a passing journey—it was an open wound that follows us every day. It was an expulsion from the life we knew and a push into a temporary existence that didn't resemble us. It was the greatest loss: the feeling of walking without roots, like a broken branch carried by the wind. We left together, but each of

us bore the weight of loss alone. And each of us knew that displacement wasn’t the end, but the beginning of a long, unending series of departures.

Homes Without Walls

On the first night of displacement, we had nothing but a few pieces of fabric, hung up hastily to cover the surroundings, while the sky remained exposed above our heads—no roof to shield us, no wall to block the wind. The cold was brutal, stabbing our exhausted bodies, and the night air crept in from every direction like an enemy we had no door to close against. Sleeping in a place with no walls or roof was a nightmare we had never known before—a feeling of utter fragility, as if we were naked before the universe and all its cruelty. Sleep was impossible; our eyes remained open, tears did not stop, and our breaths raced with our terrified heartbeats.

We lay down on the ground, trying to wrap ourselves with whatever covers we had left, but they were just a flimsy layer against the cold night. We shivered as we stared up at the sky—a sky that wasn't empty or still, but filled

with aircraft of every kind. Their sounds never faded, hovering above us like birds of death, their constant hum a reminder that we were exposed beneath their gaze. Every minute, an explosion lit up the sky in a dark red glow, cutting through the darkness and shaking both the earth and our hearts. The light wasn't fleeting—it planted more fear in us than the sound itself.

That night never seemed to end. Time felt frozen, as if the clock hands refused to move. We sat, waiting for dawn like a drowning person clinging to one last breath. And when dawn finally came, its light wasn't comforting or reassuring—but at least it meant the night was over, that those suspended hours in the dark had passed, slowly. With morning, we began trying to organize our tent—spreading the fabric more clearly, tying plastic sheets with ropes, creating something that resembled shelter. It looked laughably simple, but to us, it was an attempt to say we were still alive, and that we could survive another day.

But a tent was never a home. It never carried the scent or the warmth of a house. It was a temporary space, constantly reminding us that we were guests of the open sky. In summer, it turned into a suffocating oven, trapping the heat of the sun until those inside could hardly breathe. In winter, it became a sieve—rainwater leaked from every corner, dripping onto our bodies and faces as we tried to sleep. There was no roof to stop the cold, no wall to shield us from the wind—just worn-out fabric we tried to convince ourselves was shelter.

Every time we pitched the tent and tried to organize our lives inside it as if it were a real home, the bombing would catch up with us again, forcing us to leave and move somewhere else. We'd build a house from fabric and plastic, only to tear it down with our own hands and flee.
Build another, then leave again. A continuous cycle of displacement, with no sense of stability. And with each

move, we lost something—a piece of furniture, a piece of clothing, a piece of our spirit.

But despite it all, hope remained—fragile as it was. We kept telling ourselves: “ We’ll return one day ”.That simple promise was the only thing that gave us the strength to endure life in tents. The idea that we were only here temporarily, and would one day go back to our real homes—to our walls, our roofs, our rooms that protected us and that we had protected. That hope gave us strength, even if it was as fragile as the tent itself.

Until the day all hope vanished. The news didn’t come all at once—it crept in like a slow stab: the house was no longer there. The home we had left behind in hopes of returning to, the home that had been our support and our refuge, had turned to ash. It had been targeted, completely burned—no walls remained, no foundations. It wasn’t just a random strike; it was a

complete erasure of the house, the street, and everything around it.

When I heard the news, it felt like the ground opened beneath my feet. I couldn’t control myself—I cried with a pain unlike anything I had ever cried before. It was the cry of true loss , the loss of everything, all at once. I wasn’t crying for the walls, but for the life that was gone with them. How could I begin to process that the house I had dreamed of returning to no longer existed? That my memories, my little things I thought would wait for me, had all ended in a single moment? The photos, the books, the gifts, even the smallest things I had loved... all turned to ash.

I felt I hadn’t just lost the house , but even the hope of returning. The hope we clung to like a life raft had suddenly collapsed. There was nothing to go back to. The home we used to say was waiting for us was gone. The street that once bustled with life had become rubble, and even the scent of the place

we had memorized had vanished in the smoke.

From that day on, the tent was no longer just a temporary shelter—it became the only reality. We no longer lived waiting to return, but in the harsh realization that we had no home anymore. We began to carry our house only in memory to picture it in our minds, to summon it in our dreams but reality no longer allowed us more than fabric walls and a nylon roof collapsing under rain and sun.

A house wasn't just walls—it was our history. It was us. And when it was destroyed, we felt that a large part of us had been destroyed with it. The place no longer protected us, and return was no longer possible. We were living in tents, but deep down, we knew—we had become "homes without walls".

The Siege of Body and Soul

It felt as if the entire world had decided to shut its doors in our faces all at once. It wasn't just the shelling that besieged us , even the basics of life had become distant dreams. First, the electricity was cut, followed by the water and the internet, until we found ourselves in total isolation. It was no longer possible to contact anyone , not friends, not even relatives on nearby streets. Phones went dead, networks fell silent, and the entire city sank into a suffocating solitude. All we had left was the small circle of family around us, clinging to one another while feeling as though the outside world had vanished.

From the very first moment, a question weighed heavily on our chests: Where would we get water? Where would we find food? How would our days continue? We began dividing tasks among ourselves, as if distributing our last breaths. One of us would go out to

stand in the endless water lines, waiting for hours under the scorching sun among hundreds of people. Many times, the water would run out before his turn came, and he'd return disappointed, exhausted, with the dryness in our mouths growing worse. Another would set out to collect water for washing dishes and clothes , walking long distances and returning with barely enough for one day. My father risked going to the bakeries, where the lines were the longest and the harshest. People pushed and shoved as if in a battle for existence , everyone wanted a piece of bread, knowing full well there wouldn't be enough. The desalination plants had shut down, bakeries were closing one after the other, and what little remained could barely meet a fraction of the hunger of an entire city.

Every moment in our lives had become a small battle , getting water for drinking and cooking, collecting wood to start a fire, lighting it, cooking on it, washing dishes and clothes—each of

these details slowly drained what was left of our strength. Our lives no longer resembled anything we had known, as if we had been dragged centuries backward. More than once, we lived through real hunger—searching for a bite to eat and finding nothing. Our bodies weakened, our weight dropped to nearly half. We could no longer walk as we used to; every step was heavy, exhausting, as if it warned of collapse at any moment.

I remember entire days when the only thing we had to drink was salt-contaminated water. That was all we had—we drank it while pretending it gave us strength, though it only made the thirst more bitter. Fainting became common among us, and many were taken to hospitals due to malnutrition. Even news of deaths was no longer rare. We raced to soup kitchens distributing aid—pushing and crowding for a bag of flour or a can of beans, even though we once lived with dignity, lacking nothing. We began wishing

only for a small bite—anything that might give us the strength to survive.

With the stifling summer heat and the lack of cleaning supplies, the tents became an ideal breeding ground for bacteria and skin diseases. Old and young alike developed rashes, relentless itching, and untreated wounds. We searched for medicine and found none. We looked for antiseptics and found only disappointment. Each day, illnesses multiplied , alongside the growing feeling that we were living a slow death, one that crept silently into our bodies.

Life came to be summed up in a single question: How do we survive today? We no longer thought of tomorrow or dreamed of the future , momentary survival became our sole goal. To find a sip of water, a piece of bread, a cover to block the heat or lessen the cold of night , everything that was once basic in human life had turned into a battle, a struggle, and humiliation.

I write these words while still living amid the war breathing the scent of suffering every moment. We are still searching for water, for food, for medicine, for anything to remind us that life can still be lived with dignity. And I still wonder: How can a human being be humiliated for the bare necessities of life? How can the simplest rights become the fiercest battles? How can both body and soul be besieged until all that remains of a person is the mere shadow of survival, hanging by a fragile thread?

Medicine Under Siege

In Gaza, illness is not merely physical pain — it’s an existential question: Will we survive long enough to find medicine? Can life truly go on in a place where even the most basic treatments are denied? Medicine in Gaza isn’t a science practiced in advanced hospitals, but a daily miracle. Its practitioners strive to save lives with broken tools, no resources, and time that always runs out before the aid arrives.

When you enter a hospital in Gaza during wartime, you're not greeted by a sign or a receptionist’s smile. You’re met with the stench of blood, the screams of the wounded, and the exhausted faces of doctors. A few beds are never enough. Medicines are scarce. Generators run endlessly because there’s no electricity. Operating rooms overflow with casualties. Emergency doctors work without sleep, without food, and without

the guarantee they'll save every severed hand or child who's lost too much blood.

Here, the doctor is more than just a doctor — sometimes also a nurse, a paramedic, even a guard at the door to hold back desperate crowds. At every moment, they must make impossible ethical decisions: Who gets treated first? Who gets oxygen? Who must wait? Who receives the news that a loved one didn't survive? Every decision carries the weight of a life.

Gaza is under siege — and medicine is besieged with it. Dozens of essential medications are missing: drugs for the heart, for cancer, for dialysis, antibiotics, even basic painkillers. Sometimes, a patient is injured, the doctor operates, but there's no antibiotic to prevent infection — and the patient dies, not from the bombing, but from the blockade.

Cancer patients wait for permits to receive treatment outside Gaza. Many die before a reply ever arrives. Newborns lie in under-equipped incubators with no ventilators and leave this world before their names are ever officially recorded.

Ambulances That Can't Reach… Or Survive

Ambulance work in Gaza is a life-threatening mission. In targeted areas, ambulances can't always reach the wounded. Sometimes they are denied access. Sometimes they are themselves targeted. Many martyrs bled out on streets because no one could reach them in time.

Paramedics in Gaza don't just carry first-aid kits — they carry hearts of steel. They run through bombed streets, kneel over bodies searching for signs of life, and return home each night asking themselves: "Did I save enough today?"

There is another kind of impossible medicine here: mental healthcare. The deepest wounds aren't always on the body — they lie within. Thousands of children suffer from trauma, panic attacks, bedwetting, and long silences. Mothers cry quietly at night because their children can only sleep if they hear the sound of planes — fear has become the condition for rest.

But the number of mental health professionals in Gaza is too small. And a society barely able to treat broken bones can't spare the time or the tools to treat broken souls.

One of the hardest sights in Gaza's hospitals is watching a person die in intensive care because the only ventilator was already in use. Seeing a mother weep over her child because she couldn't find medicine. Hearing a doctor say with brutal honesty: "If we were somewhere else, he would have survived."

This is medicine under siege — heroic attempts in a suffocating reality. Behind every patient is a story. Behind every story, pain. And behind every pain, a doctor trying to extinguish the fire of death, knowing their tools are not enough.

In Gaza, every doctor is a resister. Every nurse is a hero. Every dose of medicine that arrives is a miracle. To receive treatment in Gaza is to experience life amid daily impossibility. And as long as this siege continues, medical care will remain an act of faith — a belief that healing is still possible, even when the odds are not.

Medicine here is not just about saving bodies — it’s about preserving dignity. And every wound that heals in Gaza is a small victory over a world that has allowed this siege to persist.

Unending Sounds

Night was no longer night, and day no longer day, ever since the sounds began to fill the air around us without pause. The buzzing of aircraft never faded, it slipped through the air like a thin thread, yet pulled tight on our nerves to the point of snapping. We knew it was always above us, watching us even as we tried to hide our fear. Then came the sound of artillery, like violent knocking on the doors of the earth, as if it wanted to force them open to release all the death and destruction within. After that, the silence would collapse completely under the weight of explosions that tore the soul into fragments, drawing fleeting flashes in the sky—brief, but powerful enough to plant terror deep in our chests.

These sounds repeated so often they became a part of our daily life , no different from the sound of the wind, the call to prayer, or the rustling of trees. We came to recognize them as

we knew our own faces, distinguishing between them unconsciously: the soft buzz of a surveillance drone, the sharp scream of a shell, the close thud of an explosion. Even the children, who once covered their ears and screamed in fear, began to lift their heads and say with a calm beyond their years: "That one was far... this one’s close."

But growing used to it was not comfort—it was another form of pain, the pain of fear becoming routine. The sounds no longer startled us outwardly as before, but they began to chip away at us inside, as if carving into our nerves little by little. Even our silence changed—it was no longer true quiet, but a living anxiety, a tense anticipation of the next blast. The sound, no matter how briefly it paused, always came back louder—as if the earth itself refused to give us rest.

The psychological toll was worse than any physical destruction. We trembled inside even as we sat in silence. Our sleep was broken, our dreams tainted

by an endless roar. Every time we closed our eyes, the echoes of explosions chased us—as if they lived not just in the sky, but inside our minds. Some of us began to hear the sounds even when they weren't there, as if our ears no longer knew what quiet meant, as if silence itself had become another terrifying sound.

Under this constant noise, we were no longer ourselves. We spoke in low voices, moved with careful steps, as if our entire lives were tuned to the rhythm of war. And even when we laughed sometimes, stealing a moment from the exhaustion, the laughter came out broken—quickly silenced by the next explosion.

These sounds didn't just besiege the place , they besieged our souls. They taught us that fear could take form in the air itself, that it could live with us and blend with our breath. And with every day that passed, with every shell that fell, we knew we would not come out of this experience the same. The

sounds of war would live inside us, even if the guns ever went silent.

The Faces of the Absent

The faces we love are no longer just memories—they've become the features of an entire city, reshaped each morning in the form of absence. We, the ones who remained, walk among names the way one walks through an open cemetery, touching the air in the hope that a familiar hand might respond, that a smile might emerge from a crack, or a shadow wave from a distance. In war, the present becomes suffocatingly dense, but the past is the only air we can breathe: a recorded laugh on a phone, a dress never worn, a book marked with notes for an upcoming exam, a coffee cup with a sip left unfinished. That's how we learn to mourn silent things, and to lay wreaths on empty chairs.

The first face to disappear was the one dearest to me—my classmate, whose laughter still echoes in the university halls. She called me that morning just

to ask, “How are you all?” Then the line cut off suddenly, as if someone had sliced it with a sharp blade. I didn’t understand the silence until the news came, swift as an arrow: the entire residential block was hit by a bomb. No houses left. No balconies to witness what once was. We were told whole families had been erased from the records, and hers was among them. I cried as though the heart could escape the chest. I cried the bitterness of shock—how can a person vanish in a second, leaving only their last phone call lingering like a window flung open to the wind?

In the days that followed, grief moved faster than we could name it. Names poured in—on phones, in notebooks, from people’s lips—faster than any ritual of farewell. We’d open our eyes in the morning to new messages, close them briefly, then wake again to yet another name. There wasn’t enough time for a full tear—we’d barely lower our heads in mourning before another name demanded its share of sorrow.

Grief became a flood, sweeping away everything in its path—over homes, alleyways, wandering souls—leaving only stones for us to soak with belated tears.

Then came the news I still cannot find words for: my aunt, and everyone in her home. No one could retrieve them from the rubble. Helplessness became a wall between us and any final goodbye. So we kept them just as they were in our hearts—with their exact features, their evening laughter on the rooftop, the smell of bread no nose could mistake. We carried no coffins. We walked in no procession. We did not scatter earth over shoulders we knew by heart. In that empty space, we learned a new prayer: to lift our faces to the sky and say “Peace be upon you,” then listen as the wind passed over the rubble, delivering our message.

Loss doesn’t arrive in one form. My cousin, the same age as me, mirrored my dreams in every small detail:

university, work, the hope to write our names on the walls of our country without fear. Her mother had been preparing her wedding dress, measuring sleeves and smiling. A piece of shrapnel struck the neighboring tent and extinguished everything. Fabric has memory too: a white thread stuck in the needle at its last stitch, a shiny metal pin with no more purpose, a small button waiting for a finger that would never come. When she died, we held the dress like people trying to rewind time by a single step. The attempt failed. The dress remained as testimony to a wedding that would never happen.

Then, from afar, came a report sparse in words but sharp in meaning: “He went out to get flour for his children... and didn’t return.” I picture the path he would’ve taken home, the sack on his shoulder, his head bowed beneath the sun, and two children at the door waiting for his voice on the stairs. Sometimes all we can do is finish their stories for them: we imagine walking

the route, placing the bag on the sidewalk, breaking bread together, coming home just before sunset. Then we wake to the truth—the story we completed in our minds was cut short in reality by the first explosion.

Funerals during airstrikes are like walking a tightrope over a void. Graves opened hastily. Crowds scattered before they formed. Prayers shortened to whispers. Faces glancing skyward more than toward the casket. Entry to cemeteries is restricted. Gatherings are banned. We bury our dead in narrow slices of time, saving our weeping for rooms unseen by others. When no grave matches a name, we invent a place in our hearts: a corner for a photo, a black ribbon on a shelf, a line in a journal hidden under pillows. We no longer carry wreaths—we carry names, repeating them as believers repeat their prayers.

In a city worn thin by the sound of mourning, every house holds a note of absence. No neighborhood is free of an

empty chair in the evening, a cup of tea no one reaches for, a key with no door. Homes erased entirely don't just leave behind the missing—they erase entire family lines in one blow. As if an old tree were uprooted, leaving behind no elder to tell the stories, no child to carry the grandmother's name. In those moments, we shiver at a bare question: who writes the story of the departed, when both the witness and the narrator are gone?

War turns us into children again, faced with unanswerable questions: "Who's next?" We walk gently, like someone carrying a full cup in both hands, afraid to spill it. We say goodbye to each other as if postponing the inevitable. We sleep with our names tucked under the pillow, so they don't lose their way if we're gone too long. And even when morning is kind enough to give us one more chance, we wake like someone who's received a temporary gift: one more day beneath a sky that promises nothing. We know we've survived—for

now. But we don’t know which detail might be written on us by nightfall.

Still, absence doesn’t pass over us like a cloud. We discover that presence is stronger than we imagined. They live among us in ways we never expected. My friend whose voice was cut still peers out from group photos on campus, from a news article whose lines she memorized, from notes she left behind for a paper that will never be written. My aunt lights the kitchen lamp whenever the power goes out, opens the balcony window to the morning scent, calls the children by name as she used to. My cousin the bride tries on her dress in the mirror whenever we glimpse light on white cloth, laughing at the last joke she told a week before. The man who went for flour walks beside us in the bread lines—teaching us patience, wiping our sweat at the bakery doors.

Even the funerals we never held take place in memory. We arrange the mourners, walk in silence between

surviving trees, lay down flowers, and recite prayers in a voice meant for those who want to hear. We know the rituals never fully happened out there, so we complete them inside: giving each name a moment to stand, each face a chance to appear, each unfinished message a proper end. What our hands couldn't do, our souls now carry.

But memory is not only a coffin we carry to the last line—it is also a flag. Those who leave behind no longer just belong to the past—they entrust us with a difficult task: to carry their stories truthfully, to rescue them from the dry tally of a nightly news brief. We say: this name preferred tea over coffee, always forgot his keys, laughed until his eyes teared, was planning a short trip after the exams. We say it because death, for all its solemn faces, needs a small detail to return humanity to the human. That's how we refuse to surrender to cold counting—we open windows in homes for the names, leave

seats for them in classrooms, and write them into poems.

On nights when the shelling intensifies, we spell out our names like fences of protection. We write them on small pieces of paper, organize them in digital albums, whisper them before sleep as if forming a temporary pact with survival. We carry our souls in our palms—but we carry theirs too: lighting the path for us in the dark, pointing to the safe passages through the rubble, and saying without a sound: “Walk on... we are with you.”

When morning comes, we know the gift has arrived again: another day. We wash our faces with a little water, brew lighter tea, exchange long glances that say everything without words. We don’t know what the day holds, but we train ourselves to endure all its faces. We tidy the heart like widows straighten the house after a long wake: setting chairs back in place, opening balconies to air, leaving one chair at the table for whoever returns—perhaps in a dream.

The faces of the absent do not vanish; they move forward whenever we step back. They complete the laugh interrupted by an explosion, close a fallen book, pull the blanket over a sleeping child. And when the sky draws its curtain, they step out of the photos one by one to stand at the door, touching our heads with invisible tenderness and saying: “We’re not done. We are here , in what you do, in what you say, in what you write.” Only then do we understand that absence is not the opposite of presence—it is its other form: a feature that withdraws to become deeper, a voice that quiets outside to be heard louder within.

And so, when we count our names before sleep, we add those who have gone—not because we fear we’ll join them soon, but because they’ve, somehow, become part of our number. No home is empty of those we’ve loved, as long as there’s a shadow in the corner that remembers the way, and a hand in the dark that finds

another , even if only a hand of memory. We, the ones who remained, carry the city like a book with torn pages. We try to read it by a dim light, and promise to write it anew when the skies widen once more. And until that day comes, we will go on calling the absent by name—not to summon them back (for we know what cannot return)—but so they may stay with us in the only way they still can: as small lights over muddy paths, as secret signs whispering to us each morning:
“There is still room in life for one more step”.

Children Under Bombardment

In every war, there are those who pay the highest price without ever making a decision or joining a battle—children. The youngest and most innocent among us suddenly became fuel for a world that knows no mercy. When you look at their faces amidst the rubble, you realize that war is not just shells—it is a massive machine designed to crush the future before it is even born.

The children were the first to panic when the explosions began. In the early days, they would run crying to their mothers, covering their ears with tiny hands, hoping the sounds would go away. Some asked innocently, “Why is the sky angry?” We had no answers—only hugs and whispered reassurances we knew, deep down, were meaningless. Slowly, as the bombings repeated, they began treating the sounds as part of their daily

lives. They looked up at the sky to guess what kind of aircraft it was, trying to determine whether the explosion was near or far. No one takes pride in such knowledge—but for them, it became a way to survive.

The dreams they had once scribbled in their school notebooks shattered quickly. There were no longer desks or blackboards, no teachers or morning bells. Schools turned into shelters—or into heaps of dust. Just yesterday, they would answer: “What do you want to be when you grow up?” with “Doctor,” “Engineer,” “Teacher.” Today, the only answer is: “I want to stay alive.” We no longer see in their eyes that bright spark of ambition, but rather dull shadows of a fear they never knew before.

Even playtime vanished in an instant. The ball that once filled the alleys with laughter became a scorched piece beneath the rubble. The doll that once comforted a girl at bedtime disappeared among the stones—only a

torn dress remained. Even the swings parents had crafted from rope and wooden planks were gone; some destroyed by shelling, others still hanging in the air, swinging alone, as if searching for feet that would never return. Children wandered through the ruins, carrying their broken dreams, searching through the dust for what remained of their toys—just as the adults searched for remnants of their homes.

And yet, innocence did not vanish entirely. Children could still steal moments of laughter in the midst of destruction. I saw one boy draw a tank on a ruined wall—but he colored it with bright hues and added a smiling sun above it. Another gathered small stones to build “houses” on the ground, as if he were rebuilding his city in his own way. Some chased a kite made from a plastic bag, launching it into a sky filled with smoke—as if insisting on planting a different color in a desolate sky.

But the impact of war ran deeper than any attempt at laughter. Children who once slept peacefully now trembled at every sound. Many screamed in their sleep, drenched in sweat, waking from nightmares they couldn't explain. Some became silent, sitting for hours, staring at a distant point—as if watching something we couldn't see. They lost their spontaneity, their faces growing more like adults than children.

Every home in Gaza now holds a story of a changed child. A boy who lost his father and began asking questions far beyond his years. A girl who saw her mother pulled from under rubble and now refuses to sleep alone. Children who once ran joyfully through the alleys now sit quietly in the corners of tents, waiting for food and water with pale faces. It's as if war stole their childhood and left behind small bodies carrying grief far too heavy for them.

And yet, they remained the very image of innocence. Sometimes they'd run after aid trucks, waving their tiny

hands—as if bidding farewell to the world, or pleading with it. They shared pieces of bread with joy, as if sharing candy. They laughed when they found simple treasures—a heart-shaped rock, a bird's feather, a piece of wood that looked like a toy. Every time we saw them, we knew: the human spirit is more stubborn than death, and innocence can grow even in burned soil.

But the question that lingers in the air: what kind of future awaits these children? How will they grow, when they learned at such a young age that the sky offers no safety, that houses do not stand, and that play can end in a deafening scream? Who will give back what was lost? Who will mend what broke inside them?

Each time I see them, I understand that war doesn't only kill with weapons , it leaves scars on the soul that never fade. Children under bombardment are an open book of shattered innocence: they laugh despite the pain, draw

despite the ruins, and dream, even as everything around them insists that dreams are impossible.
And yet, they insist on leaving a small mark that says: childhood can still survive , even among the ashes.

The Eid That Never Came

In Gaza, Eid is not measured by the calendar, but by life itself. Those who await Eid know it’s not just a celestial date—it’s a rare moment of joy in a life suffocated by everything. But this year, Eid never came. It remained stuck at the gates of the camps, lost between the sirens and the echoes of explosions. Its decorations fell beneath the rubble, and its chants of “ Takbeer ” were drowned out by the roar of warplanes.

We knew the taste of Eid: the dawn “ Takbeerat ”, new clothes, the bright faces of children, visits to relatives, the scent of “ ka'ak ” wafting through the neighborhoods, and laughter filling the homes despite poverty. Eid was a short pause from reality—a brief chance to remember we are human, and that we deserve to feel joy.

But war changed everything.

When Eid morning came, people didn’t head to the prayer grounds—they went searching for their loved ones under the rubble. Sweets were not handed out, only photos of the martyrs. Children didn’t go out to play, but stood in long lines for water and bread. Eid this year was pale, voiceless, joyless—lifeless.

Some families opened bags where they had hidden the children’s Eid clothes, hoping it might lift their spirits. But the children refused to wear them. "Why should I wear my new clothes when my brother was killed?" said a little girl, looking at the pink dress her mother had lovingly picked out weeks before the war.

The “ Takbeerat ” we used to chant at dawn echoed this year through funerals. The chants mingled with sobs, and instead of saying "Eid Mubarak," we whispered, "May Allah give you patience." In every alley, there was a home that had lost a loved one.

In every tent, a child waited for a father who would never return.

Even “ Eidiyas” —small cash gifts— turned into prayers. Toys became distant wishes. No one asked children anymore, “What do you want for Eid?” Instead, we said, “May Allah protect you.”

I saw a boy walking barefoot through the rubble, searching for what was left of his broken toy. I asked him, “Where are your Eid clothes?”
He answered, “They burned with our house.”
Then he smiled and said, “But I’m okay—we’re still alive.”
His words were the only Eid we felt.

In Gaza, Eid did not come—but we waited for it. Its absence reflected the state of a city that still cries out to the world: “We are here. We want to feel joy, too.” Every mother dreamed of dressing her children in beautiful clothes, cooking what little she had, offering chocolates, and hearing

laughter unbroken by the sound of warplanes.

But this Eid... it never came.

Yet even so, we have not lost hope in its return. Eid will come, even if late. It will be born from the ashes. We'll hang its decorations on the poles of our tents. We'll distribute sweets in cemeteries. And we will whisper to the martyrs:
"Eid is here. You are in our hearts, in our prayers, in the stories we'll never stop telling."

Women of Gaza

At the heart of every war, there are faces that remain standing even as everything around them collapses. In Gaza, it was the women who stood as the backbone, bearing on their shoulders what mountains could not. Beneath the bombs, among the tents, in the lines for bread and water, and in the funerals of loved ones, the image of the Gazan woman emerged as an unbreakable icon of resilience.

The women of Gaza were not merely victims—they were the guardians of life. I saw them filling the void when men were absent, carrying children in weary arms, dragging sacks of flour along dusty roads as if they were carrying the weight of the world. They baked bread over damp firewood and turned a handful of lentils into a feast for hungry children. Each woman was a self-sustaining nation, preserving the home and protecting what was left of life’s familiar rhythm.

The mother who lost her son did not collapse. She stood tall, wiped her tears with a trembling hand, then embraced her other children to ensure they didn't lose themselves too. Many mothers buried their children with their own hands, then returned to the tent carrying the remaining bread to share with neighbors, as if to say: "Life must go on, even if the sky has abandoned us."

There were women who ventured into the streets in search of water, carrying heavy buckets under a scorching sun, walking kilometers to keep their families alive. Others stood for hours in bakery lines, jostling among crowds, quietly whispering prayers in their hearts that no shell would fall on them before they made it home.

I saw women weaving hope out of nothing. One crafted a doll for her daughter from an old piece of cloth, tying a few threads and drawing a smiling face, telling her: "Here's your new toy." Another gathered the

children inside a tent and began telling them old stories about grandparents, the sea, and orange groves—anything to distract them from the never-ending sound of aircraft overhead.

Even in moments of loss, the women stood as walls of patience. The funerals of their sons were hastily arranged under fire, but the voices of women were not silent. They rang out in ululations mixed with tears—a blend of pride and grief, a message that death cannot frighten those who gave life.

Gazan women were also tired hearts bleeding in silence. No body was spared exhaustion, no soul spared sorrow. Many sat at night on the edge of tents, crying quietly, hiding their faces from the children, letting out tears they couldn't release during the day. But with dawn, they rose again, tied scarves around their heads, and stepped out to face another day in search of life.

This is not artificial heroism—it is the instinct to survive. The Gazan woman did not choose to be a wall, but war placed her on the front lines. And so she became the wall, the shade, the final defender of everything that matters.

In the alleys of the camps, they sat together, sharing bread as they shared burdens. One would say: “We will remain. Not all of us will die,” and the others would laugh a sorrowful laugh, wiping their tears with one hand while holding a trembling child with the other.

And despite everything, they still sang. The voices of women rose even above the roar of artillery. At night, they recited hymns and prayers; during the day, they adorned the tents with comforting phrases for the children huddled in their arms. Their voices became the last thread tying these children to the idea that life still exists beyond this hell.

The women of Gaza were not just mothers, wives, or sisters—they were walking embodiments of the homeland. Each one was a living archive, preserving the names of martyrs and carrying their photos in her heart. Each was a storyteller, recounting what happened so that nothing would be lost to silence.

And in the end, when we ask: How did Gaza remain standing? the answer will be found in the image of the women who stood atop the rubble, heads held high, baking bread over wood fires, telling stories to children, and burying loved ones with trembling hands and unbreakable hearts.

The women of Gaza are the spirit that no siege could suffocate, and no war could kill. They are the lesson that teaches the world that true strength is not in weapons—but in a heart that knows how to protect life amidst destruction.

Shards of Hope

Amid piles of rubble, where dust mingles with blood and the roar of warplanes drowns out all other sounds, hope is sometimes born from the simplest of things. In Gaza, hope wasn't a grand slogan or a lengthy speech—it was a piece of bread shared between the hungry, a bucket of water passed from one hand to another, or the smile of a child who still hadn't lost their ability to laugh.

In those difficult days—when electricity, water, and food were gone, and life itself seemed to hang by a thread—there were moments that proved humanity can still shine through the darkest times. A few vehicles arrived from outside the neighborhood, carrying tanks of water. They stood in the streets and distributed to everyone without discrimination. We saw people rushing forward, but they shared what they received with a strange sense of fairness. One man filled a small bottle,

then handed it to his neighbor before taking a sip himself, as if to say: “Your survival is my own.”

Food was scarce—so rare it was almost nonexistent. Yet every household extended what it had. A plate of lentils shared among three families. A single loaf of bread cut into ten pieces. A little girl hiding half a date in her pocket, only to give it to her younger brother at night. We shared everything, because we knew life couldn’t go on if each person clung to their last bit alone.

At night, when darkness fell and all comforts vanished, the tents transformed into tiny homes filled with love. A woman would cook whatever she could, then send a plate to her neighbors’ tent. A man would give out the firewood he had left so women could light fires. The children would gather and play with the simplest toys—running between the tents and laughing—leaving the adults in awe:

how can laughter be born in the heart of such misery?

Hope was even present in whispered prayers. The elderly, with tired voices, would raise their hands to the sky and say, “Tomorrow will be better.” No one knew when that tomorrow would come, but the mere belief in it was enough to keep hearts beating.

We saw men rescuing strangers, women cradling children who weren’t their own, and young people spending hours organizing aid lines so chaos wouldn’t erupt. Though war had stripped us of everything, it couldn’t take away our ability to give.

I saw hope in the smallest of gestures: in a hand reaching out to help an elderly person across the rubble, in a piece of bread split in two, in a kind word whispered to a child crying in the dark. We lived on these shards—small but radiant—like fragments of light falling from a burning sky.

Sometimes, hope took the form of sudden laughter. A child found a torn football and began kicking it between the tents. Slowly, dozens of children gathered around, laughing so loudly that even the adults paused their thoughts for a moment. Even the funerals—rushed and brief—carried a strange mixture of grief and pride. The women's voices weren't just weeping; they ululated through tears, as if to say: "You will not break all of our lives."

All of this made us certain that hope doesn't die, even in the heart of death. Maybe we didn't have homes, or enough food, or even the certainty that we'd wake up the next day—but we held on to the belief that tomorrow existed, and that God would grant us one more day.

Those "shards of hope" were scattered everywhere: in the smile of an old woman who lost her home but still praised God, in the laughter of a child running through ruins, in a hand that shared a meal with the hungry, in a tent

that gathered strangers who became family. From these shards, we built a life unlike any other—a life that taught us that even the harshest circumstances cannot kill our humanity, nor stop our hearts from dreaming that tomorrow just might be better.

The Silence of the World

We waited for our voices to reach beyond our borders, for the world to hear the cries of children beneath the rubble, to pause—if only for a moment—before images of blood and destruction. But what reached us was only silence. A heavy, suffocating silence—more brutal than the roar of warplanes. We came to realize that the world can see everything, but it chooses to turn away, as if Gaza were nothing more than a fleeting scene in a film it doesn't care to watch.

Every day, we watched the news reduce our story to a few brief minutes:
"Dozens killed."
"Hundreds injured."
"Thousands displaced."

Just numbers—recited coldly, without faces or names, without stories or details. They spoke of us as if we were mere statistics, not human beings carrying souls and dreams. We cried

out: We are not numbers. We are entire lives. But the world did not listen.

We felt betrayed by nations that boast of human rights by day, and fall silent as we're slaughtered by night. How can an organization claim to protect children while Gaza's children are killed one after another? How can a world that prides itself on civilization stand idly by in the face of massacres? We weren't asking for the impossible—only that this madness be stopped, that someone intervene to save our lives. But in response, we received only prolonged silence—silence that felt like complicity.

To outsiders, Gaza is just a "conflict zone," a headline passed around by news agencies. No one knows that Gaza is made of small homes once filled with love, bustling markets alive with joy, schools echoing with the laughter of students. No one imagines that behind every image of a martyred child, there was a mother waiting at the door, a father dreaming of watching

him grow up. No one realizes that every demolished home held memories, family photos, books, laughter, and secrets. The world sees the rubble, but refuses to hear the full story.

We waited for a word—just one honest word—to lift from us this sense of isolation. But they chose the language of neutrality, as if Palestinian blood were worth less. Many people around the world expressed their outrage, but governments hid behind lifeless statements:
“We are concerned.”
“We call for calm.”

As if the massacre were a minor dispute needing only a few polite phrases.

In the heart of the destruction, we said to each other: Aren’t we human, too? Don’t we deserve to live in peace? But no answer came. The war exposed the world’s double standards. Every child who fell raised a new question: Where

are you? Why do you let us be wiped out? Is there not a single heart that beats for us?

My message to the world, as I write these words, is this: look at us with the eyes of truth, not through the lens of politics. Remember that Gaza is not just a passing news item—it is an open wound in the human conscience. Understand that your silence kills us twice: once with bombs, and again with neglect.

To those who hear me: we are not asking for pity. We do not want tears spilled across TV screens. What we want is justice. That our lives be valued as others' lives are. That our cries be heard as if they were your children's cries. That our blood be seen as human blood—no less precious than anyone else's.

We are writing from the heart of fire. We are sending out our voices despite the siege, in hope they reach someone whose soul remains untouched by

silence—someone whose conscience hasn't been betrayed by fear or self-interest. We want the world to know: "We are still here". We live despite death. We dream despite siege. We believe, even after betrayal.

The "**Silence of the World**" did not extinguish us. It made us stronger.
But history will not forget.

It will write that Gaza stood firm—while the world stood silent.
It will write that children were killed while global institutions issued hollow statements.
It will write that humanity was put to the test—and failed, in front of everyone.

And maybe, just maybe, this voice will reach someone who holds the power to act.
Maybe one day, the walls of silence will shatter, and the voices of truth will rise above all the noise.

Until then, we will keep writing, keep telling, and carry our wounds as witness that the world let us down,
But we never stopped believing that justice will come.

The Art of Resistance

When doors are closed, when the siege tightens, and fear becomes the air we breathe, art remains the only window through which we glimpse life. In Gaza, art has never been a luxury or a side interest—it has always been an act of survival, a way to preserve identity, a voice that defies death. Amidst the sounds of warplanes and rubble, another voice always emerges: the tune of an old oud, a poem written through tears, or a child's drawing in charcoal on a shattered wall.

Art is Resistance

Art for us is not merely colors on canvas—it is resistance. When a child draws a colorful house among the ruins, they are saying to the world, *"My home will return."* When a girl plays her violin while the walls of her tent tremble from explosions, she proclaims that music is more powerful than bombs. When a poet stands on the

wreckage of his home and recites verses of resilience, he plants hope in people's hearts more deeply than a hundred political speeches.

Painting—Walls That Speak Beyond Words

Walls in Gaza are not silent. They are open diaries, telling stories through color and symbol. I saw young artists carrying paint cans during rare moments of calm, transforming broken walls into canvases. They paint faces of martyrs, eyes of children, red flowers amidst ash, and white wings defying restraints. Every mural on a destroyed wall is a scream that says: "We will not die. We will remain."

A little girl who once lost her home picked up a broken crayon and began drawing on an old cardboard box. She drew a house with big windows and a garden full of flowers. I asked her, "Whose house is this?" She replied simply, "Ours, when we return." Her

drawing carried a faith the jets could not destroy.

Music—A Tune That Silences War, Even Briefly

Music in Gaza is a daily miracle. A young man strums his oud among the rubble, and children sing in tents to chase away the night's gloom. One evening, a young man who had lost his brother sat outside his tent, picked up his worn guitar, and began to sing in a hoarse voice: "We shall remain…" He wasn't singing just for himself, but for everyone listening. Even the warplanes, in that moment, seemed to pause.

In the camp alleys, you sometimes hear the beat of small drums carried by children, singing traditional songs passed down from their mothers and grandmothers. These aren't mere entertainments—they are bridges connecting them to their roots, reinforcing the belief that no matter how long the war lasts, it can never

steal the land's melody from their hearts.

Poetry—A Language That Survives Even When Everything Else Falls

Gaza gives birth to poets. Here, words are written with tears and blood. In every home that lost a martyr, there is an unfinished poem. In every displacement tent, a silent poet searches for words. Poetry is the memory that cannot be bombed.

I remember a friend who had been writing poetry since high school. She lost her home and her father in a single night, yet never stopped writing. She composed a poem on an old school paper she found among the debris. Her words read:
"If they destroy my home's walls, they cannot destroy my words. If they break my pen, I will write with my blood."
When she recited it to us, we all felt that her poem became a temporary home for our souls.

Art as Identity—A Memory That Cannot Be Erased

The siege tries to make us forget ourselves, to abandon our features and culture. But art restores what they try to steal. Folk songs, Palestinian embroidery, and the old tales told by grandmothers are all different colors of resistance. When a woman wears a dress embroidered in red and black threads, she declares to the world: “I am Palestine, and I will not erase my identity.”

I saw women in the camps embroidering colorful threads onto white cloth, despite the hunger, fear, and lack of time. They said each stitch was a cry against forgetting. Embroidery isn’t just decoration—it’s an art that tells the history of a land, the story of a people, and an identity that refuses to break.

Laughter Painted Amid the Ashes

Even in the most painful moments, art is born as a smile. A child draws a tank but places a flower atop it. Another draws a missile, but adds wings to turn it into a bird. That simple childhood imagination, that pure creativity, is a silent form of resistance—stronger than any slogan.

The Message

The art of resistance in Gaza is not a luxury—it is a “parallel life” we create to stand against a death forced upon us. It is the voice that says: “We are not silent victims. We are human beings who dream, create, and give.” It is proof that identity cannot be erased by bombs, and that spirit cannot be broken no matter how tight the siege.

Here, art is not just a painting on a wall—it is the wall of resilience. It’s not just a song—it’s a homeland of

melodies. It’s not just a poem—it’s an eternal memory.

Language Under Siege

In Gaza, it's not only geography that is under siege — language, too, is barricaded. Words themselves change under the pressure of bombardment, facing survival just like the people who speak them. Under siege, words are no longer spoken the same way, nor written with the same ease. Language becomes an act of resistance, a form of resilience, fighting not to be erased, forgotten, or distorted.

In times of war, language becomes a tool for survival, not a literary luxury. Words are no longer decorative — they are cries, urgent messages, attempts to prove existence. "We are here," "We're not dead yet," "We dream despite it all" — these are no longer slogans, but lines etched into the memory of rubble.

The poet writes of the martyrs not just to mourn them, but to immortalize them. A child cries his mother's name

beneath the ruins — the word becomes a weapon against loss. Women shout the names of their sons, keeping their voices alive amid the crowd of absence. In Gaza, language is not just a means of expression — it is a means of survival.

Language in the Burned Schools

When schools were burned, it wasn't only the walls that went up in flames — the notebooks, the dreams of little ones writing their first letters, the stories of first grade, the poems once memorized — all disappeared. And yet, language did not.

Children began writing on cardboard boxes from aid deliveries, on tent walls, and sometimes even on their hands. A little girl wrote "I want to go back to my school" on the wall of her shelter. A boy wrote his martyred father's name in the sand so he wouldn't forget. All of these are attempts to reclaim what war tried to steal: our voices, our memory, our language.

The Language of the Media: Between Truth and Betrayal

Outside, the story of Gaza is told in a different language — our suffering reduced to cold phrases: “clashes,” “exchange of fire,” “casualties reported.” Words stripped of warmth, words that do not reflect the real pain, words that bury truth beneath the illusion of neutrality.

We in Gaza resist this language too. We write our story in our own words. We narrate our truth from the inside, without waiting for anyone to grant us a “balanced” perspective. Under siege, even language is invaded — reshaped by those who own the microphones.

Language as a Document of Life

Every word written in Gaza is a document of life. A mother leaves a message on a box of bread for her daughter: “Stay strong, I’ll return.” A young man scribbles on his wall before

it is bombed: “Here lived my family.” A poem is written in the dark, memorized because paper is scarce and time is precious.

Language under siege becomes lean, sharp, urgent — but it does not die. Like the people of Gaza, it is wounded, but unbroken. It weeps, but never stops saying: “I am here.”

Conclusion: Nations Are Born from Words

In Gaza, every letter is resistance. Every word is a weapon. Every poem is a shelter. Language is not a luxury — it is a necessity. It is the last thing we hold onto when everything else is lost. It is the lifeline we tie around our hearts so they do not drown in sorrow. It is the bridge connecting us with those who’ve never seen war, yet can feel its echo through our words.

Language under siege becomes purer, more honest — because it is spoken under fire, not in air-conditioned rooms.

That’s why every word born in Gaza deserves to be read twice: once as literature, and once as proof that life still resists, that voices are still heard — even if faintly.

What Was Never Said

In every war, much is said—statements, numbers, reports, slogans, and images that flood the screens. But more important than what's been said is what was never said.

What was never said about Gaza is not only what the media overlooked or what politics ignored, but also what dignity buried in people's hearts, and what voices swallowed in silence so as not to break in front of the children. What remains unspoken is the long silence that shrouds the camps at night—silence that hides thousands of stories that can't fit into a two-minute news bulletin.

What Was Never Said About Fathers

No one says that fathers in Gaza cry sometimes—but they do so in secret. Behind the tent, in a dark corner, or under the cover of night when no one

can see them. No one says one of them sold his wife's wedding ring to buy milk for their baby, or that another wandered the streets all night simply because he couldn't face his family with the news that the food had run out.

No one says that some fathers feel ashamed because they cannot offer a single blanket for their children, or because they have nothing left to give when a neighbor knocks on the door. People say war is cruel—but rarely from this angle: from the view of a man who longs to be a pillar, yet is shackled by need.

What Was Never Said About Women

No one says that women in Gaza don't sleep until they've ensured everyone else is safe. They cover their children, extinguish the fire, straighten a tent that no longer shelters anything, and then sit in silence hiding a weight too heavy for words. No one says that one of

them hasn’t eaten in two days to save food for her children, or that another hid her tears when the roof of her tent collapsed on her old wedding dress.
No one talks about the mothers who wear fake smiles to tell their little ones: “Don’t be afraid, everything is okay,” while fear gnaws silently at their ribs. They say women are strong—but they don’t say that this strength is practiced daily, in silence, without cameras, without applause.

What Was Never Said About Children

No one says the children have stopped asking questions—not because they understand everything, but because they’ve realized no one has answers. No one says a nine-year-old boy gets up in the middle of the night to check if the tent is still standing, or that another child buried his broken toy in the dirt because there was no way to fix it.

No one says a child's only laugh might come from a ball made of paper, or from a story told by their grandmother under candlelight. They say children forget quickly—but no one mentions that the memory of war leaves imprints on them, even if they haven't yet learned how to write it.

What Was Never Said in the News

What they don't say is that a "ceasefire" doesn't mean safety, that "aid" doesn't mean survival, that "exchange of fire" doesn't explain what it's like for a mother to hold her child tight as a missile approaches, not knowing if this embrace will be the last.

What doesn't make the headlines is that someone died because no one heard their cry for help, or because the call dropped while they were begging for rescue. There are homes no one reports on because they didn't belong to anyone famous—just names

swallowed under the rubble, faces that meant everything to their families, yet nothing in a newsroom rundown.

What the Camera Didn’t Show

The camera didn’t capture the moment a mother wiped dust off her martyred son’s face and whispered, “You were always the most beautiful.” It didn’t catch the trembling hand of a child writing “I miss you, Dad” on the side of a tent. It didn’t show the father carrying his child’s body in a plastic bag because there were no more coffins, or the family dividing one bowl of lentils into four meals.

None of this was shown—because it isn’t “media content.” It’s just real life in the wrong time, full of details that don’t “grab attention,” yet hold the clearest truth.

What Was Never Said in Prayers

In every tent, there is a prayer never heard. No one says how many times the grandmother whispered, “Oh God, protect them,” or how many times a father muttered, “Don’t let me fail my children,” or how many times a mother pleaded, “Please don’t make me bury my child with my own hands.”

These prayers are not broadcast on loudspeakers, nor livestreamed on the news—but they form an invisible shield around the whole camp, a source of resilience no one can explain.

What Was Never Said About the Night

At night, the silence grows. The voices fade, but the heart doesn’t rest. No one says sleep doesn’t come easily in the camp, that every distant sound feels like an explosion. No one says anxiety comes before dreams, and that what

people wish for most at night is just for the night to pass.

In most cities, night brings rest. In Gaza, night is another test. Lights don't go out because it's bedtime—they go out because the heart is too tired.

What Was Never Written in Books

Not all stories have been written. Not the story of the child who waited for his father at the camp's gate. Not the story of the young man who hid his engagement ring in a broken biscuit box. Not the story of the man who lost everything except his voice—so he used it to speak for those who couldn't.

The writers here are not professionals. They are people who lived the indescribable and write it however they can: on cardboard, on walls, or in memory. Every story told here saves something from being forgotten—and

declares: What was never said… was the most important of all.

What Was Never Said... Is Everything

What was never said is life in all its contradictions. It is truth without embellishment, patience without applause, death without witnesses, and life without light.

In Gaza, what remains unspoken fills the spaces between every sentence, between every image and its reality, between what we hear and what we know is left unsaid. And this, precisely, is what keeps the story alive: that there is always something left unspoken… waiting for its moment to be told.

When the Heart Rises from the Ashes

After everything we've endured—destruction, hunger, displacement, and the loss of loved ones—the big question remains: How does the heart continue to beat when it has turned to ashes? How does it rise from the rubble and declare that life is still possible?

Gaza is not just a city; it is a heart. And this heart has become accustomed to being struck, besieged, and bled, yet it has never stopped beating. Those of us who live under its sky know that every bloody sunset is followed by a dawn, and that no matter how long the night lasts, morning always rises—even over the shards of a demolished home.

We, the children of this land, have learned that resilience is not a choice—it is fate. Every broken stone becomes

a witness, every drop of blood a flag, every tear a river of strength. Even as we bury our small dreams beneath the rubble, we know that this land will bloom again.

Unforgettable Scenes

I’ve seen faces etched forever in my memory.
A little girl holding her torn doll, smiling even though her house had turned to ash.
A mother baking bread over a wood fire to feed the neighbor’s children whose own mother is gone.
A young man who lost his entire family, yet stood holding a shovel, lifting rubble off his neighbors’ homes.
These are not fleeting scenes—they are proof that “ the heart rises every time we think it has ended ”.

Hope as a Fragile Thread

Hope in Gaza is not optional—it is what keeps us alive each day.
We cling to it like a drowning person clings to driftwood in a stormy sea.
Hope is what makes us say: “We will return.”
It is what drives children to draw brightly colored houses, even though reality is painted in gray.
It is what urges us to rebuild a new tent after the old one has been bombed.

Hope is believing that this land, despite all the ruin, will bloom again.
That the planes will go, the explosions will fade into memory, and one day we will tell our grandchildren these stories of survival as tales of resilience.

The Final Message

To the reader,
To anyone reading these words:
“ Gaza is not just a headline in the news ”.

It is a story of people, faces, dreams, laughter, and tears.
Gaza is a spirit that cannot be broken, a heart that will never die.

You might think this story ends on the last page—but it does not.
The war continues.
The suffering has not ended.
Every day, a new chapter is written.
Every day, more martyrs fall, more homes are destroyed, more children lose their dreams.
But also—every day, hearts rise from the ashes , declaring that tomorrow is possible, and that , life, despite everything, is undefeated .

This Is Not the End

If we live, we will continue writing this story , Filling the coming pages with new tales of strength and triumph over pain.
And if our lives are cut short, then we ask of you: “ pray for us ”.
Carry our story with you.

Be our witnesses , so we are not erased from memory.

Gaza will remain , even if all its homes turn to rubble.
It will live in our hearts, in our blood, in every word we've written.
We were not born to be defeated—
We were born to be the eternal proof that humanity is stronger than war .

So now, you may close this page.
But remember:
The story is not over...

“Gaza Resists”

"Gaza Resists" is not just a story of war — it is a living testimony from the heart of the fire. Pages that carry the voices of the people, the tears of children, the resilience of women, and the pain of departure. The story of a city standing between death and life, between ashes and hope...
So the world may know that Gaza, despite everything, still beats with life.

NOVEL

GAZA RESISTS